Pakistan's support to Kashmir

†1988. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Pakistani President in his message broadcast on 21st January, 2002 has stated that "Kashmir Hamare Khoon main hai, Samarthan jaari Rahaingay;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether Government have conveyed their protest to the Pakistan Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) Propagandist statements on the part of the Pakistan President cannot alter the fact that the entire State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. A part of the territory of the State is under the forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan.

Government are firmly resolved to take all necessary measures to preserve the security and territorial integrity of the country.

Passport application collection Centres

1989. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have started passport application collection centres at every district Headquarters;

(b) whether this practice does not involve any delay in processing and issue of passports; and

(c) what steps have been taken to ensure that passport applicants are not harassed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) The Government has decided to decentralise the passport services and to bring these services closer to the people. Under this scheme, the passport applicants can deposit their filled passport application forms

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

through the office of the District MagistratcSuperintendent of Police in every state throughout the country. The districts where the number of applications exceeds 10,000 per year will have dedicated District Passport Cells. The forms will be scrutinised and documents checked by the District Passport Cells and then forwarded to the Passport Office who will issue the passports. The scheme has already been launched in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Sikkim and Nagaland.

(b) Since the passport application will be accepted at the district offices and would normally be sent to the concerned passport office along with the clear police verification report, it is envisaged that the time taken to issue a passport will be reduced and a passport could be issued in about 4 to 5 weeks time.

(c) The Government has taken steps to closely monitor the decentralisation scheme to ensure that passport applicants do not face any inconvenience. The present system of submission of applications at Passport Offices would also continue.

Assault on Indians in Durban

1990. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been cases of assault on Indians living in Durban in South Africa;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps to ensure safety of the Indians living there; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.